THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) Since 1974, there have been 36 cases of unauthorised absence from duty abroad by officials of the Ministry of External Affairs. This number is small compared to the overall strength of the Ministry. Disciplinary proceedings have been initiated in all such cases. To further prevent unauthorised absence, the Government has decided to limit validity of passports of officials posted abroad and impound passports of those on unauthorised absence.

Return of Kohinoor Diamond

534. SARDAR GURCHARAN SINGH TOHRA:
SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of members of parliament have recently written to Government to take up the matter with the British Government for the return of Kohinoor Diamond;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. 25 Members of Parliament have written to the Prime Minister requesting the Government to take up the question of the return of Kohinoor Diamond with the United Kingdom.

(c) Government are in the touch with the relevant authorities in the United Kingdom, through the High Commission in London and are exploring ways and means for obtaining a satisfactory resolution of the matter.